

“Improving the Quality of Your Journey”

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1. Identify Contemporary Sources of Destructive Role Overload. The Superperson Myth is the false and destructive belief that it is possible to be “everything to everyone,” with maximum fulfillment and minimal compromise. In reality, expanded opportunities often lead to unrealistic expectations and chronic role overload. When we acknowledge the physical and emotional toll of trying to do too much, we can choose to reject the ideal of “perfectionism” and accept the challenge to be “consistently adequate.”

What personal price am I paying for trying to do too much?

2. Enhance Your Self-Esteem. In pursuit of significance, we may take on too much to gain the approval of others. We believe the more *we do*, the more *we are*, and we confuse being of *use* with being of *value*. Self-esteem is the conviction that we are **lovable** and **capable**—intrinsically worthy and able to handle life’s challenges. Our self-assessment is our most important judgment, since self-acceptance forms the basis for self-improvement.

When have I said “yes” to gain the approval of others?

3. Identify Your Sense of Purpose or Meaning. Our purpose is the glue that holds our life together--the vision that inspires us. Many successful people have become masters of delayed gratification by embracing the “psychology of postponement.” Too late, they discover that “life is what happens while you are making other plans.” Worry less about “doing things right” and ask instead whether you are “doing the right things.”

Write an inspiring Mission Statement encompassing my significant life roles, unique gifts, and highest purposes that will daily shape my character and guide my actions.

4. Establish Priorities and Manage Your Time Wisely. Clarifying our mission helps us prioritize our daily actions and keep “first things first.” We must say “no” to some good things in order to say “yes” to our best. *Urgent* tasks structure our days, while *important* things that characterize our lives often have no timetable, and get postponed.

What are some “good” things I am doing that keep me from achieving my “very best?”

5. Downscale and Simplify Your Life. The more we accumulate, the more anxiety we feel about protecting our material things and retaining the prestigious titles we acquire. Typical Americans are past our load and to our limit in every arena of our lives. Most of our lives have become so fast-faced, hectic, and complex that we miss out on the simple pleasures. We can cut back, cut down, and cut out the unnecessary excesses.

What specific things can I do to downscale and simplify my life?

6. Resolve to Grow Older, Not Just Get Older. Simplifying doesn't mean we stop risking and growing; it's uncluttering our lives to focus more energy on our continued self-discovery and healthy risk-taking outside our comfort zone. The process of personal growth is a lifelong journey that is enhanced by the conviction that "the best is yet to come." Our accumulated wisdom allows us to grow in understanding and self-acceptance if we are willing to experience the pain and changes that our journey brings.

What meaningful goals have I put on hold that I could now pursue?

7. Choose a Positive Attitude and Resolve to Use Adversity for Growth. Adversity is an inevitable part of life, and painful experiences can be our teacher. All adversity eventually produces the seed of something positive. Emotional pain reminds us that we need one another on our journey and that we are not self-sufficient. Wounded healers use our own experience of pain as a source of healing power to comfort others.

What painful experience has been my teacher?

8. Invest in the Welfare of Others and in Healthy Relationships. Our deepest needs are satisfied by our relationships, not our accomplishments. Our life anchors are in people. Healthy, balanced relationships foster our sense of community, restore our perspective, and improve our outlook. Don't let toxic role overload allow your home to become the place you go when you're tired of taking care of everyone else.

How can I use what I am learning to improve my relationships?

9. Cultivate a Humor Perspective. Laughter defuses tension, lights up your face, relaxes your muscles, restores your perspective, shrinks your problems, buoys your spirits, aids healing, and helps the immune system. Humor can serve as a balance pole that helps us navigate the precarious tightrope of life. Lighten up and don't take yourself so seriously.

What funny personal anecdote has changed my perspective about a stressful situation?

10. Practice and Model Self Care. We nurture others from our own emotional overflow. When we are depleted, we lose our enthusiasm and our efficiency. Self-care is not selfish; it is self-preservation. To *take care* of ourselves, we have to be willing to *take*. The ultimate form of giving is to be a gracious recipient of care. Recognize that life is an alternating rhythm of serving and being filled. Choose life-giving coping mechanisms.

What can I begin doing to take better care of myself?

Action Promise: What specific action will I take to improve the quality of my journey?

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Dr. Mom's Favorite Quotes

"Perfectionists are people who take great pains and give them to other people." *Dr. Marianne Neifert*

"No judgment we ever pass in life is as important as the judgment we pass on ourselves." *Dr. Nathaniel Brandon*

"If you think you can or you think you can't, you're right." *Henry Ford*

"The purpose of the body is to carry the brain around." *Thomas Edison*

"One of the most beautiful compensations in life is that you cannot possibly help another without helping yourself in the process." *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

"I did the best I could with the circumstances and knowledge I had at the time." *Dr. Marianne Neifert*

"Housework is a cinch, provided your standards are low enough." *Dr. Marianne Neifert*

"If you're not beautiful at 17, it's unfortunate. If you're not beautiful at 70, it's your own fault." *A Senior Citizen*

"My eyesight is getting worse, but my vision is getting better." *JC Penney at 95 years of age*

"Starving man wait long time for roast duck to fly into mouth." *Chinese Proverb*

"I'd rather wear out than rust out." *Theodore Roosevelt*

"If you have a pulse, you're going to have pain." *Max Lucado*

"Problems are inevitable. Misery is a choice." *Ann Landers*

"We can't change the direction of the wind, but we each can trim our sails." *Unknown*

"That which does not kill me makes me stronger." *Friedrich Nietzsche*

"Ultimate freedom is the freedom to choose your attitude." *Viktor Frankl*

"Some women have the best husbands. Others make the best of the husbands they have." *Ann Landers*

"Aloha means to welcome the stranger and seek the good in him or her." *Reverend Abraham Akaka*

"Be of love a little more careful than of anything." *E. E. Cummings*

"We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give." *Dr. Albert Schweitzer*

"Our friends are God's way of apologizing for our families." *Unknown*

"There's not much fun in taking medicine, but there's a lot of medicine in having fun." *A Senior Citizen*

"Fatigue makes cowards of us all." *Vince Lombardi*

"Sleep knits up the raveled sleeve of care." *William Shakespeare*